

RAF and JTF Capable HQs

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A Regionally Engaged Army shapes and sets theaters for regional commanders employing unique Total Army characteristics and capabilities to influence the security environment, build trust, develop relationships, and gain access through rotational forces, multilateral exercises, mil-to-mil engagements, coalition training, and other opportunities.

—General Raymond Odierno¹

Regionally Aligned Forces are the ways that the Army will accomplish its ends or vision of being “globally responsive and regionally engaged” with reduced means in forces, headquarters, and budgets. For the last decade the U.S. Army focused on Operations Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Central Command (CENTCOM) was the United States’ main effort while other combatant commands were economies of force in respect to force allocation.² With the end of OEF and OIF, the U.S. Army has an opportunity to shape itself for the future challenges of reduction in force levels, fiscal resource constraints, global threats, and withdrawal of forward-deployed U.S. forces. Senior leaders in the Army seized that opportunity in 2010 by introducing the concept of Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF).³ Initially applied to brigade combat teams (BCTs), the RAF concept expanded to corps and division headquarters in 2012.⁴

Achieving the Army Vision through the RAF concept requires stronger commitment in habitual alignment of headquarters, units, and individuals, and holistic commitment by the joint community and the Army in enabling corps and divisions to be joint task force capable headquarters.⁵ Regionally aligned corps and division headquarters provide the mission command and operational linkage between the geographic combatant commanders (GCC) and tactical forces. This paper establishes the historical context of how America has postured forces, and then explains the interconnection between the Joint Vision 2020, the Army Vision, and RAF concept to ensure effective forces for the future. Next, the paper examines the impact of RAF and the importance of the corps and division headquarters as JTFs in certification, augmentation, alignment, and employment. Finally, the paper discusses the issues and opportunities of the RAF concept across current doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, and facility (DOTMLPF) systems.

Historical Context

The U.S. Army remained globally engaged after World War II, as many units and headquarters lived and trained forward deployed in regions of Europe and Asia. The Department of Defense (DoD) aligned operational units to those regions based in the Continental United States (CONUS) through war plans. In 1950, half of the Army’s ten active divisions were overseas. At the height of the Cold War the Army grew to eighteen divisions with five forward-based. In 1998, the Army had six corps headquarters with three forward deployed.⁶ More recently, the Army continues to draw down and draw back.

The next adjustment to Army structure occurred in 2004. General Peter Schoomaker initiated modularity in order to change the fixed combat echelon in the Army from the division to the brigade combat team. Modularity provided commanders more tailorabile forces for operations and contingencies. The Army developed a more joint and expeditionary mindset as the ending of the Cold War and the transition to a

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preponderance of the force being CONUS-based resulted in operational requirements for smaller, self-contained brigade elements.⁷ Modular division and corps headquarters could serve in the roles of army forces commander (ARFOR), joint forces land component commander (JFLCC), or JTF headquarters in which to “plug” the needed mix of brigades and subordinate elements to accomplish missions.⁸ The simultaneous execution of OEF and OIF required the Army to focus on a highly-effective and efficient system to rotate ready modular forces in support of CENTCOM through the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) process. The ARFORGEN process efficiently rotated units through reset, training, and deployment phases in order to prioritize and manage readiness over long periods of high demand.⁹

Two significant changes impacting corps and division headquarters were the inactivation of Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) and the disestablishment of standing joint force headquarters – core elements (SJFHQ-CE). JFCOM was a functional command established in 1999, focused on joint development, experimentation, training, and integration. In 2003, the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) authorized each GCC to establish a SJFHQ-CE to be the core element around which to establish joint task forces. These elements possessed joint education, situational understanding of the regional operating environment, and understanding of the GCC’s vision. JFCOM manned two SJFHQ-CEs, which European Command (EUCOM) frequently requested to be the core element around which to build joint task forces. In 2008, JFCOM reorganized its SJFHQ-CE section into the Joint Enabling Capabilities Command (JECC).

JFCOM inactivated in August 2011.¹⁰ The Joint Staff assumed most of JFCOM’s functions. With the closure of JFCOM, the JECC became part of U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) to continue supporting JTF formation for GCCs.¹¹ While successfully employed by combatant commanders, resource management decisions resulted in the disestablishment of SJFHQ-CEs in 2011.¹² Closing JFCOM and disestablishing SJFHQ-CEs saved money, but reduced enabling resources and dispersed remnants which GCCs need to build a critical requirement for joint headquarters. One option to fill that requirement is corps and division headquarters, but these headquarters need joint manning, joint training events, and a regional focus.

The Army is now reduced to three CONUS-based corps headquarters and ten active divisions, with only two divisions based outside continental United States (OCONUS). Corps and division headquarters add a capacity most nations with either smaller militaries or only local defensive forces do not possess. Therefore, these headquarters are a scarce, global resource to synchronize effects and operations at the operational level across the joint interagency intergovernmental multinational (JIIM) environment.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, described the future environment and the globally integrated operations required for the Nation in the *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020*. This concept envisions joint and partner elements combining quickly to integrate echelons and capabilities to leverage advantage against threats characterized by “proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, competitor states, violent extremism, regional instability, transnational criminal activity, and competition for resources.”¹³ The Army RAF concept, especially the role of divisions and corps as JTF-capable HQs, complements the concepts, and resultant force employment implications.

The requirement for organizations to form and deploy with global agility to execute mission command in a JIIM environment is critical. Regional expertise in organizations and individuals facilitates global posture and speed through understanding from increasingly CONUS-based forces, in order to empower operational and informational networks in GCCs, functional commands, and across the JIIM environment. Headquarters require versatility as “broad trends in warfare cannot often be discerned in advance, it will be impossible to predict with certainty when, where, and for what purpose Joint Forces will operate.”¹⁴ Finally, both Joint Force 2020 and the RAF concept highlight the importance of regional expertise, interoperability, mission command, and relationship building.¹⁵

Regionally Aligned Forces Concept

The Army defines RAF as:

Regionally Aligned Forces provide the Combatant Commander with up to joint task force capable headquarters with scalable, tailorabile capabilities to enable him to shape the environment. They are those Army units assigned to combatant commands, allocated to a combatant command, and those capabilities Service Retained, Combatant Command aligned and prepared by the Army for combatant command regional missions. Includes Army total force organizations and capabilities which are: forward stationed; operating in a combatant command area of responsibility; supporting from outside the area of responsibility, including providing reach-back; prepared to support from outside the area of responsibility. Regional missions are driven by combatant command requirements. This requires an understanding of the cultures, geography, languages, and militaries of the countries where they are most likely to be employed, as well as expertise in how to impart military knowledge and skills to others.¹⁶

This definition provides clarity of purpose, emphasis on relationships, and focus for Army forces and headquarters. The purpose is clearly to support the assigned, allocated, or aligned forces with the capacity and capability that GCCs require. The concept emphasizes the importance of relationships and environmental understanding. Organizations develop relationships and trust across the JIIM environment based on regional missions and exercises before crises. The subordinate command tailors the training, manning, and equipping to the environment and unique interoperability requirements. The RAF concept also facilitates efficiencies in training and education in cultural, regional expertise, and language skills (CREL) focused on a specific region or defined area. Habitual relationships and geographic focus reduce the time to "cold start" a headquarters for a mission or exercise and enables more efficient stewardship of resources.

Army units now fall under one of three different support relationships to GCCs for the purposes of RAF implementation. They are assigned, allocated, or service retained/combatant command aligned (SRCA) through a mission alignment order. SRCA is an Army term that is understood by the Joint Staff, but not yet recognized in joint doctrine.¹⁷ These relationships allow for direct liaison authorized (DIRLAUTH) with ASCCs and GCCs, but the headquarters remain assigned to FORSCOM until operationally required.

RAF Nested in the Army Vision

The Army Vision in the 2013 Army Posture Statement is:

The Army is regionally engaged and globally responsive; it is an indispensable partner and provider of a full range of capabilities to Combatant Commanders in a Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental and Multinational environment. As part of the Joint Force and as America's Army, in all that we offer, we guarantee the agility, versatility and depth to Prevent, Shape and Win.¹⁸

The benefit realized through regional alignment is in developing and sustaining regional relationships and understanding to the combatant commander's advantage. American forces demonstrated agility and versatility as conventional forces executed diverse missions over the last thirteen years of war. Many assumptions valid in Iraq and Afghanistan may not be valid in future conflicts, from size of coalition, permissible entry points, size of the U.S. Army, and presence of a mature infrastructure. The Army must transition from a counter-insurgency focus to global understanding in order to facilitate the agility, versatility and depth to "Prevent, Shape and Win." In the words of Sun Tzu, "What enables the wise sovereign and the good general to strike and conquer, and achieve things beyond the reach of ordinary men, is foreknowledge."¹⁹

To be globally responsive, specific units must develop understanding or that foreknowledge of specific regions through engagement. While the Sun Tzu quote was in reference to the use of spies, the preceding verse is applicable to the current security environment, for “to remain in ignorance of the enemy’s condition simply because one grudges the outlay of a hundred ounces of silver in honors and emoluments is the height of inhumanity.”²⁰ The RAF concept is the most efficient and effective way to develop understanding to meet combatant commander requirements from an increasingly CONUS-based force. Because habitually aligned units develop and maintain communications and relationships with counterparts in their supported GCC, the insights and understanding gained in those relationships may in the future bear the fruits of anticipation.

A critically important aspect to the Army’s vision statement’s strategic approach is preventing conflict and shaping the environment. RAF units accomplish this vision through steady-state activities in all geographic combatant commands in support of their theater security cooperation plans (TSCP). Units accomplish the effects of preventing and shaping through engagement, access, relationship building, partnership, and capacity-building investments prior to crisis. In deliberate operations, achieving stability in phases 1 (shaping) and 2 (deterring) is key to preventing escalation of regional conflict.²¹ Post-conflict, RAF forces provide the best option to sustain gains in phase 4 (stabilize) and phase 5 (enable civil authority) as the cultural understanding, relationships, and capacity building are most critical.²² Being regionally engaged through steady-state operations across the globe, while having the capacity to be globally responsive, is the best strategy for the means available. Using corps and division headquarters for mission command leverages the experience and power of executing JIIM engagement at the general-officer level, habitually focused on specific regions.

RAF Corps and Divisions as a JTF-Capable Headquarters

The Army corps is the operational headquarters for decisive land combat. The division is the tactical headquarters designed to synchronize brigades in full spectrum operations. Each can become a JTF with augmentation and certification.²³ Joint Publication 3.33, *Joint Task Force Headquarters*, states the preferred way to build a joint task force is around an existing headquarters.²⁴ In FM 3-92, *Corps Operations*, and the soon-to-be published FM 3-94, *Division, Corps and Theater Operations*, the JTF role is doctrinally secondary to the roles of ARFOR or land component commander.²⁵

The reputation and power of a U.S. JTF headquarters is built upon JTF past performance, a rigorous certification process, authorities of the commander, and synchronizing effects of joint manning. “A combatant commander (CCDR) will be the JTF establishing authority in most situations, but SecDef, a sub-unified command commander, and a commander, joint task force, also may establish subordinate JTFs.”²⁶ The Army’s goal is to make all corps and divisions JTF Capable HQs by 2017 in support of the RAF concept and combatant commanders.²⁷ Becoming JTF capable requires meeting expectations of the supported CCDR in mission-essential tasks (METL), preparing a joint task force joint manning document (JMD), preparing a joint mission-essential equipment list (JMEEL), implementing a joint training plan, and possessing and reporting acceptable mission readiness posture as that JTF-capable HQ (see Figure 5).²⁸

Two major challenges in employing divisions and corps as joint headquarters are the time required to (a) build situational awareness and (b) build the joint team. Regional crises requiring a JTF, by nature, are expedient events. The average planning time for HQs to build and deploy as a JTF for a contingency is forty-two days.²⁹ Activating Reserve Component (RC) individuals or accomplishing JMD sourcing in time to employ is problematic, not to mention having them arrive for team building and the planning process. The more ad-hoc an organization is, the longer it takes to achieve common vision, training certification, and unity of action. In augmenting the core of a JTF-HQ, the command receives personnel from joint organizations, individuals from other services, inter-organizational partners, liaison officers, and possibly the JECC.³⁰ Each source has

different strengths, weaknesses, and responsiveness to consider in building and certifying the JTF. Repetition of JTF exercises and operations in aligned regions increases competency and speed in building teams, based on mutual understanding of requirements, shortfalls, and capabilities in that GCC, and even in specific regions designated by the GCC.

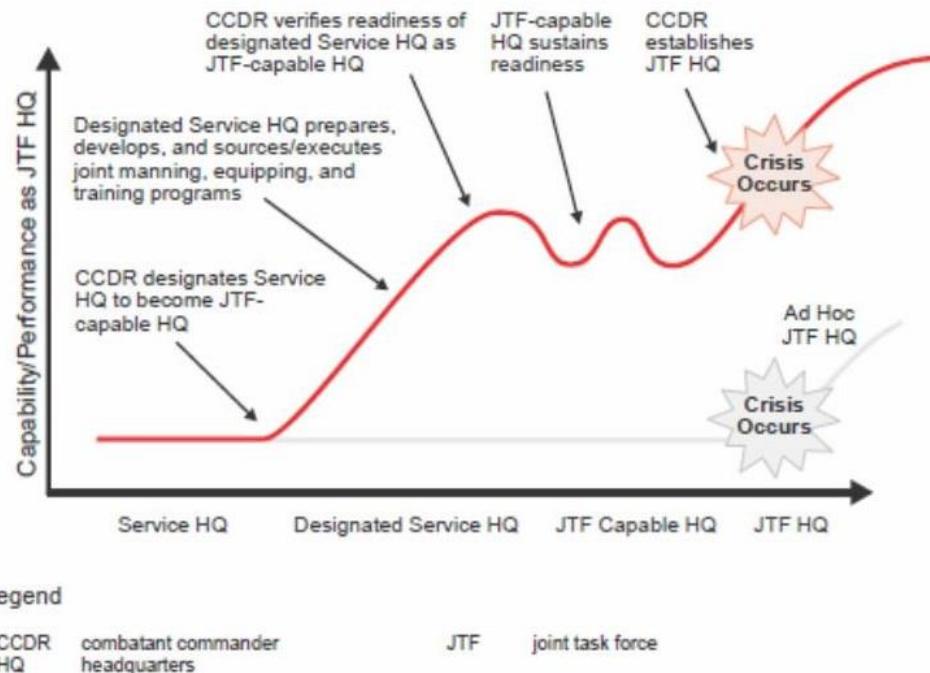


Figure 5. Joint Task Force-Capable Headquarters Readiness³¹

The JECC formation provides a stopgap in manning and equipment with joint capacity until individual augmenters arrive. The JECC provides mission-tailored, joint capability to establish JTFs for a short period of use, maximum of 120 days; longer through the request for forces (RFF) process. The JECC consists of three elements: a Joint Communications Support Element (JCSE), a Joint Public Affairs Support Element (JPASE), and a Joint Planning Support Element (JPSE).³² Once JMD augmentation positions become filled, the JECC elements return to USTRANSCOM. Combining JECC expertise, in critical joint functions absent from corps and division headquarters with the RAF HQs regional expertise for the critical planning and initial phases of deployment and employment of the JTF, is a powerful technique to build speed and capacity.

Under RAF, the Army requires corps and divisions to train as JTF-capable HQs, implying multiple roles for the corps and divisions. Adding the task of “operate as a JTF-capable HQs” distributes the command’s focus in three directions: training, readiness and exercise missions under the Title 10 and AR 220-1; home-station requirements; and JTF certification requirements. Army headquarters’ certification requirements, while complementary, do not satisfy joint requirements, especially if the joint manning and equipping is not complete or the certification of exercises is not from a joint source.³³ The headquarters continue to have multiple foci when deployed as a JTF HQs and must fulfill ARFOR requirements, potentially some degree of CFLCC duties, meet requirements of the ASCC, and continue to meet home-station requirements. The multiple roles force the JTF headquarters to operate up, down, across, and back.

Alignment

Regionally aligning the headquarters focuses and develops depth in situational awareness, thus reducing the impact of a cold start. This focus is critical for planners in operations, logistics, communications, and intelligence war-fighting functions (Wff). This focus also increases the depth of relationships and interoperability with foreign partners or other departments and agencies of the government already being built by previous exercises as part of the TSCP. During the Cold War, return of forces to Germany (REFORGER) exercises developed that level of partnership, interoperability, and coalition resolve against the Soviet Union. REFORGER included North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries and U.S. forces from both CONUS and Europe in large, annual exercises on location in Europe. The focus on regions in the RAF concept increases familiarity with standing contingency and operational plans in a similarly resolute and consistent manner.

Greater staff situational understanding increases operational effectiveness. Often, joint task forces receive augmentation by higher-level staff members from that GCC. In coalition operations, JTFs must leverage U.S. and host-nation liaison officers. “Commanders and staffs must account for differences in partners’ laws, doctrine, organization, weapons, equipment, terminology, culture, politics, religion, and language.”³⁴ JTFs can use multinational officers in key positions to underscore their inclusion and gain clarity on the cultural differences from their experience and regional perspective. The habitual nature of RAF increases the common vision between headquarters. Corps and division habitual alignment is especially important for the Military Personnel Exchange Program (MPEP), which permanently assigns exchange officers between U.S. and foreign staffs.³⁵ If headquarters routinely change alignment, then the utility of the MPEP experience is lost both for the U.S. and the exchange country. The long-term alignment of corps and division headquarters will increase the speed and effectiveness to execute an operational mission in the same region as aligned, should the requirement develop.

The Department of the Army (DA) goal is to align divisions habitually by 2017 once the drawdown from Afghanistan reduces operational demand. The current habitual alignments are I Corps to PACOM, III Corps to CENTCOM, and XVIII Airborne Corps to the Global Response Force (GRF) mission.³⁶ At the division level, the Army assigned the 25th Infantry Division and 2nd Infantry Division to PACOM.³⁷ CENTCOM’s current requirements are two divisions to the OEF mission and a portion of 1st Armored Division to Jordan.³⁸ The 82nd Airborne Division is allocated to the Global Reaction Force mission.³⁹ The requirements leave five active divisions and ten National Guard divisions to cover AFRICOM, NORTHCOM, SOUTHCOM and EUCOM.⁴⁰ However, as long as the rotational division requirement remains in Afghanistan, a division is committed to the train up for OEF and one division is in reset from OEF. BCTs require another decade to all be regionally aligned, based on operational requirements and budgetary effects on readiness.⁴¹ The current alignments do not preclude the use of those forces in other theaters based on contingency operational requirements, but designate the corps and division headquarters as the sourcing solution of choice by the Army for those regions.

RAF does not drastically adjust force management, but provides better focus and alignment to regional or mission sets earlier. The RAF concept provides units and headquarters with real-world missions and depth in regional expertise contributing to TSCPs. RAF links GCC demand to resources and readiness. Headquarters thus build habitual relationships with the GCCs, ASCCs, U.S. Government agencies in the region, and host-nation militaries. SRCA permits that linkage while FORSCOM retains responsibility for Title 10 requirements and flexibility to manage readiness and deployments based on global requirements.

If FORSCOM does not habitually align brigades with the same GCC as the regionally aligned division for the long-term, then efforts dissipate across multiple AORs. The concept does not align all brigades

numbered in military heraldry with that division, as the GCC may need a mix of infantry, stryker, and armored brigade combat teams. Training resources for CREL is more efficient at home-station if the alignment of brigades does not change except for contingencies. There is additional benefit in the GCC and ASCC giving guidance to brigades through divisions that are aligned and have a common understanding and vision. Division and brigade alignment will not always be possible, but FORSCOM should prioritize habitual RAF alignment as sourcing criteria for SRCA.

Combatant Command Approaches

CENTCOM and PACOM applied the RAF concept against unique operational requirements. CENTCOM deployed the 1st Armored Division (-) in Jordan as a response to conflict in Syria. PACOM's Pacific Pathways approach applies RAF units against the PACOM TSCP exercises, while PACOM postures equipment and units to address any emerging operational needs. In both cases RAF headquarters, GCCs, and partners gained advantage from regionally-focused headquarters with JTF capability.

When the Army expanded the RAF concept to corps and division headquarters in May 2012, 1AD aligned with CENTCOM, who then used 1AD headquarters for exercises with Saudi Arabia and Jordan in 2012 and 2013. In addition, the division headquarters supported CENTCOM forward command posts with individual personnel. CENTCOM also focused the division on a specific known area of conflict and concern, the Levant region of Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. CENTCOM fulfilled TSC and manning requirements while developing the regional expertise, JIIM relationships, and the capacity of the 1AD Headquarters. Regional focus led to 1AD being not just the sourcing solution of choice for the GCC, but also for the Jordanians in Exercise Eager Lion 2013.⁴²

This regional alignment focused 1AD's CREL training to a specific region and mission profile. Within the AOR, 1AD headquarters tailored command posts and develop a joint and multinational mentality on a real-world problem through multiple exercises. Receiving that focus early also provided the division time to reach back to the Army War College and its Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) for help, along with humanitarian assistance training from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Additionally, a result of regional alignment and early planning was the resourcing of the JECC to train the division headquarters' staff.⁴³

In May 2013, 1AD headquarters deployed a tactical command post forward to base outside Amman, Jordan to become CENTCOM Forward – Jordan (CF-J) with augmentation from other services, multinational LNOs, and some civilians.⁴⁴ The mission in the words of SECDEF Hagel was to, "improve readiness and prepare for a number of scenarios" in response to escalation of the Syrian crisis.⁴⁵ Thus, 1AD provided the U.S. a core headquarters element that was trained, possessed previous relationships with the Jordanian military, and understood the operational and strategic environment. This agility provided options to the combatant commander who created political leverage for the Obama administration, shaped the environment, and potentially prevented the expansion of conflict. Once the strategic direction changed, the headquarters quickly transitioned preparation to build military capacity, assist with refugee management, and sustain U.S. resources that filled gaps in Jordanian defenses.⁴⁶

The RAF approach allowed the division to develop depth in environmental understanding. CF-J adjusted the required senior rank structure based on the mission, potential force size, and political dynamics.⁴⁷ First Armored Division continues to leverage the JECC, PKSOI, and other organizations to refine their situational awareness. The experience garnered from previous exercises proved invaluable as the division formulated a shared vision and strategic narrative with the Department of State (DoS) and USAID, while balancing the strong relationship with the Jordanian military.

Having fewer divisions challenges the Army to sustain deployments over time, surge forces, and maintain reserves for contingencies. The 1st Armored Division changes personnel from its home-station headquarters to CF-J, as there is no capacity to rotate division headquarters based on the mission continuing indefinitely and the commitment of other Army divisions elsewhere.⁴⁸ Thus, CENTCOM committed its aligned division. CENTCOM would have to request another headquarters to fill any emergent requirement for a full division, which would not have the advantage of alignment to the AOR.

Rebalance to the Pacific through RAF

The effect of not employing PACOM units to OEF will effectively rebalance Army forces to weight the Pacific theater based on the number of assigned units.⁴⁹ Under RAF, 2ID with a rotational RAF armored BCT; 25ID with its brigades from Hawaii and Alaska; and I Corps Headquarters, with 7ID and its brigades, support the PACOM GCC.⁵⁰ PACOM's dilemma is how to sustain regional engagements across the vast AOR.

PACOM sustains an aggressive TSCP with multiple exercises, involving corps and division headquarters. In 2013, I Corps and 25 ID completed JTF certification exercises through joint exercises in the Pacific AOR.⁵¹ Corps and division HQs sent a tactical headquarters element to regional TSCP events to gain Pacific experience through coordination, exercise control, and as the principal training audience.⁵²

US Army Pacific (USARPAC) developed the Pacific Pathways plan to operationalize RAF employment, exercise the movement, and confirm the access of Stryker units afloat in the Pacific. Units deploy Stryker equipment, aviation assets, and forces from multifunctional brigades in Washington or Hawaii. Then equipment moves afloat along a "pathway" through Asia that intersects with security cooperation exercise locations. Soldiers and headquarters fly in, link with the equipment, and execute missions in support of the TSCP or in response to operational or humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HADR) requirements.⁵³ At the operational level, I Corps establishes command relationships, sets conditions for the exercise, and manages the potential for continuous response to exigencies. During exercises, the 25ID headquarters assumes TACON of Pathway elements and operates as exercise director while performing ARFOR tasks. Upon completion of the proof of principle, USARPAC plans to expand the concept to more Pacific Pathway rotations each year.⁵⁴

Pacific Pathways derives the most advantage from its approach, effect, and engagement benefits. Pre-positioning the equipment afloat exercises and confirms the ability for U.S. access in the region, as well as enhances responsiveness. The long-term relationships and cultural understanding developed through habitual and repetitive train-ups, planning, coordination, and execution addresses PACOM and partner countries' requirements. Security cooperation increases capacity and support of America's partners in the region, producing better global security with less U.S. presence over time. The strategic communication effect is that U.S. actions confirm U.S. commitment to partners without the cost and risk of permanent overseas basing.

DOTMLPF Analysis

Across DOTMLPF, issues and opportunities exist by using RAF corps and division headquarters as JTFs for exercise and operations in support of GCC. Commanders shaping their regions to deter in steady state and defeat aggression through building partner capacity create an increase in demand for RAF units and headquarters, especially with the potential for more units available due to the expected end of OEF.⁵⁵ Regional focus with long-term aligned headquarters builds relationships and reduces risk through understanding. Corps and division headquarters must balance their Title 10 responsibilities, AR 220-1 training requirements, and home-station responsibilities with the preparation to certify as joint headquarters or sustain JTF capable HQ status. While DOTMLPF is an Army construct, the nature of this topic affects the joint community. The Joint

Staff and Army must adjust policies, mitigate weaknesses, and seize opportunities to support divisions and corps becoming joint task forces through the below recommendations.

Doctrine provides the military with a codified way to operate and fight. Under the RAF concept, all divisions and corps provide one joint capable headquarters to operate as joint task forces in support of the GCCs.⁵⁶ As the RAF concept is Army specific, the impacts of this concept have not manifested in joint doctrine. The recently published FM 3-92 *Corps Operations* addresses the challenges and requirements to operate as a joint task force by focusing Chapter 5 on “Corps Headquarters Transition to a joint task force Headquarters.”⁵⁷ The Army is focusing corps and division doctrine toward operations as a joint task force with the upcoming publishing of ADP 3-94 *Division, Corps, and Theater Army Operations* which will supersede the FM 3-91 *Division Operations* published in 1996. ADP 3-94 (final draft) plans to include RAF concepts. If RAF is to be an enduring concept, then its effect must be embedded in the doctrine for corps and division.⁵⁸

One of the primary risks to the RAF concept at the corps and division headquarters level is the loss of capacity based on cuts to headquarters force structure. In August 2013, SECDEF McHugh directed twenty-five percent cuts to two-star headquarters and above.⁵⁹ In addition to the twenty-five percent reduction, active-duty manning efficiencies may result in a number of slots coded as Reserve Component (RC) positions. Currently, DA recommendations select most of the positions to code as RC in human intelligence, fire support, liaison officers and airspace coordination cells, all in the main command post.⁶⁰ Degradation in manning negatively affects the building of certified teams and employing tailored portions of the headquarters. Forming a JTF will still require augmentation through a JMD. The more often divisions and corps operate as JTF headquarters or train as a JTF-capable headquarters, the better the fidelity of their JMEELs and JMDs. If the JMEEL and JMD requirements are consistent across aligned division and corps for all GCCs, then those requirements and constructs might shape joint organizational formations and Army force structure, similarly to the former SJTFHQ-CE or current JECC.

The joint staff should expand the number of JECC teams to allow depth for operational employment, incorporation in exercises, and retention of capacity for the GRF. The joint staff should review the manning mix of the Joint Planning Support Element based on the reduction in table of organization and equipment (TOE) of the division and corps headquarters to include accounting for those positions moved to the reserve component. This review provides the HQs experienced joint capacity best tailored to the task requirements of the JTF headquarters.

There is little depth in the number of corps and division headquarters for geographic regions and strategic application, even after the withdrawal of forces from OEF. Three corps headquarters and ten active duty division headquarters divide against six GCCs, the GRF mission, and the defense of Korea.⁶¹ The 1AD employment in Jordan now commits a significant portion of that headquarters against that mission until complete or transitioned to a standing JTF. Division HQs rotations in support of OEF also reduce capacity based on the time for train-up and reset. Divisions must also conduct TSCP exercises. The Joint Staff requirement to manage established standing joint task forces or require GCC to sustain the deployment of the RAF JTF increases in importance. The flexibility required for divisions as a resource underscores the necessity of the long-term SRCA relationship to provide focus and DIRLAUTH for the GCC, while allowing global flexibility for the Joint Staff and the Army.

Three important issues for corps and division training under RAF are the certification as a joint task force, the incompatibility of the ARFORGEN process based on a lack of depth in numbers of corps and division headquarters, and language training. The Army needs to manage individual and collective education, training, and certification toward joint requirements while also meeting Army requirements.

The Army needs to strive to leverage as many exercises as possible to sustain JTF capable HQs capacity. ASCCs and FORSCOM need to encourage the Joint Staff to expand the joint exercise program to include exercises that are currently Army specific. Corps' decisive action METL now includes JTF certification and the division decisive action METL now includes a JTF capable, intermediate tactical HQ requirement.⁶² Training requirements for decisive action METLs can complement joint headquarters and regional exercises. Corps and division staffs must understand the joint training program requirements and the joint exercise program in addition to the Army readiness and training requirements. U.S. Training and Doctrine Command (USTRADOC) needs to coordinate with the Joint Staff and FORSCOM to make efforts to embed efficiencies in managing the dual, but complimentary systems.

The RAF concept uses the ARFORGEN template and approach to manage resources to generate unit readiness. Using ARFORGEN for BCTs creates less friction in establishing the RAF concept than creating another process. The model of reset, train, and employ does not work if a GCC is one deep with most corps and division headquarters, with the exception of CENTCOM and PACOM, which reflects rebalance to the Pacific and focus on OEF and the Middle-East. Corps and divisions must be managed as low density high demand organizations in the mission force pool requiring continuous availability periods.⁶³ Long term SRCA alignment provides GCC depth, corps and division efficiencies, and FORSCOM flexibility.

Alignment of units assists in efficiencies in CREL training, but achieving measurable language proficiency levels is unrealistic for most personnel and may not match career assignments. The Army should expand the Olmsted and other scholarship programs for regional/language expertise for post-key developmental (KD) field-grade positions. These initiatives imbue more regional expertise, language training, and joint training earlier in careers. In addition, the Army should revisit the dual track program for foreign area officers, who develop expertise in language that would give advantages in operational positions on coalition headquarters staffs. These initiatives require analysis by branch proponents and human resource commands to prevent unattended consequences. Furthermore, talent management and habitual alignment increases returns on investment in exercises, deployments, and language training.⁶⁴

Command and control (C2) systems' requirements will increase given the growth in exercises, operations, and transitions to JTFs across the GCC's TSCPs. Maintaining portions of the HQs at home-station increases requirements. There are limited resources in the JCSE for immediate employment. Corps and divisions need to recapitalize OEF Regional Command and CJTF command and control equipment to establish home-station mission command suites. This mission command capacity could assist brigade and below elements deployed in the region and provide reach-back when JTF-HQs are employed for exercises and operations. Headquarters should prepare to operate more austere than they have the last 10 years of OIF and OEF. Habitual regional alignment permits headquarters to better anticipate C2 challenges better through mission analysis and repetition to forecast equipment, certification, and training requirements.

The RAF concept complements mission command as described in General Martin Dempsey's 3 April 2012 White Paper, "Mission Command." Regional alignment facilitates building the key attributes of understanding the environment; communicating vision and intent; and establishing trust early between Army corps and divisions and the ASCC and GCC. The TSCPs and long-term regional focus provide the ability to build teams and networks before crisis. RAF facilitates headquarters leadership achieving competitive tempo, "operating at the speed of the problem," and effectively dealing with complexity and ambiguity.⁶⁵

Corps and division rank structure allows for three- and two-star commander engagement by an operational headquarters with regional and strategic JIIM partners. Under the RAF concept, these commanders drive the operational process, develop teams, and inform and influence internal and external audiences across services, agencies, and countries.⁶⁶ Having general officers as JTF deputy commanders creates flexibility in non-

contiguous operations, especially for span of control challenges. Corps headquarters, by design, command subordinate organizations led by general officers and have a higher rank structure and experience level in deputies and functional staff. As only three corps headquarters remain in the Army, division headquarters are more readily available and regionally focused in every GCC. Division leadership must develop the capacity to lead coalitions, to include units led by multinational general officers; meet home-station requirements; and meet ASCC, JTF, and ARFOR requirements.

Three personnel issues are salient for the RAF concept: coding for joint professional military education (JPME) II, individual regional alignment, and joint augmentation. There are opportunities to enable headquarters and the RAF concept; The Joint Staff and TRADOC, through JPME, must provide better joint preparation for corps and division staff officers. Providing more JPME II school slots are a coding, officer time, and school capacity issue. The corps and division TOE needs more 3H – Joint Planner positions for their staffs, especially in the TAC. The Army should consider mandatory JPME II certification as an elective at the Intermediate Level Education (ILE) course for majors projected to certain corps and division staff positions. Students in the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) should attend the JPME II course between ILE and SAMS, as all graduates will serve on corps, division, or higher staff and therefore need certification to operate in JTFs.

To get the most out of the RAF concept, the Army must transform its personnel management system to optimize talent use.⁶⁷ Enhanced talent management would assign an identifier for regional alignment at the field-grade level for officers to indicate specific regional experience. This identifier, like other skills, would be a descriptive criteria when determining future assignments, as an army skill identifier (ASI) or a secondary MOS code like the foreign area officer letter designation after the ‘48’ denoting regional focus. The assignment process could also consider regional experience in command and key-billet slating guidance, fellowship applications, and broadening assignments. Coding the duty positions creates too much complexity on the TOE and assignment process. Managing individual alignment at the field-grade level allows development of breadth in experience, allows cross pollination of ideas between regions, and prevents “being stuck” at one location or region based on one’s first assignment. However, the needs of the Army, other skills or experience, and officer choice would still be criteria. General Allyn, the FORSCOM commander, states “ideally, units and Soldiers that have gained valuable experience through regional alignment will build upon their experiences as they rotate to other assignments.”⁶⁸ Currently there is no way to manage regional experience data for talent management across the Army.

CJCS Dempsey is promoting regional depth through career management with the Pacific Hands programs. The program aligns an officer’s operational, broadening, and staff assignments, CREL training, and education to a geographic region.⁶⁹ Considering thirteen years of war focused on the CENTCOM region and the rebalance to Asia, beginning a Hands program with PACOM’s AOR is a valid start. Currently, assignments do not deliberately develop depth in a region, but under RAF expansion, a Hands program in all regions is essential.

If corps and division headquarters under RAF train and employ as joint headquarters capable staffs, then manning policies should resemble joint staffs in coding, duration and training. Currently only one position in these staffs is a 3H – joint planner coded billet. More positions, especially in the TAC, need to be coded as such. Officers filling 3H – joint planner billets must remain in the headquarters for longer tours, three years as the joint standard. Lieutenant colonel key positions on the division staff should occur post-battalion command for two years and allow for a Senior Service College waiver. The Army needs to incentivize lieutenant colonel positions on the division staff in a similar fashion as positions like Combined Training Center senior trainers and division G3s positions to draw and reward talent.

Corps and division home-station posts need mission command facilities and joint connectivity capacity with theater to track ongoing operations and train JTFs prior to employment. Some headquarters currently have these facilities. The Army can recapitalize hardware resources available through the drawdown of the Army and redeployment of equipment from theater. This equipment provides reach-back capacity for the division across staff functions when deployed, subordinate unit teams, or other JTFs in the region, reducing the required footprint forward. There are existing and historic examples to make valid assumptions for the facilities, JMDs, and JMEELs to increase the corps and division capacity to sustain readiness as a JTF-capable HQs.

The Army plans to reduce to 450,000 active-duty personnel and must balance priorities due to the effects of a smaller budget and potential sequestration. If the Army does not have the funds to train, equip, and deploy, then maintaining regional expertise, relationships, readiness, access, and relevance becomes problematic.⁷⁰ In testimony to Congress in September 2013 on planning for sequestration, General Raymond Odierno established five priorities to “ensure that we align resources to set ourselves on course to realize this Army.”⁷¹ The top three relate directly to the RAF concept and are “to develop adaptive Army leaders for a complex world, to build a globally responsive and regionally engaged Army; and to provide a scalable and ready, modern force.”⁷² The effects of the budget occur regardless of RAF. In the words of General Odierno, “Regional alignment does not create new, unfunded requirements for training, equipping, or employing the Army Force, nor does it create new programs for overseas employment. It better organizes and prepares the Army to fulfill existing, funded requirements.”⁷³

Commanders and resource managers must become more adaptable and disciplined in resourcing regional alignment. Corps and division leadership and planners need an increase in travel funds; logistic and sustainment for small, distributed teams; training and education resources; communications solutions for globally distributed operations; and interpreter funding to build relationships, manage operations tempo, and develop regional expertise. Different environments will require off-the-shelf or rapid equipping force solutions.⁷⁴ Such fiscal flexibility requires disciplined management to prevent abuse, but cannot be restrictive to relationship building or effective operations. Organizations executing RAF for GCCs can leverage funding sources such as Title 22 (DoS authorities and funding), joint exercises, etc. Funding requires a balance, but the current fiscal environment has the propensity to cause commands to default to a restrictive posture.

One risk to the nation is a loss in ability to maneuver at brigade and higher echelons due to focusing on other tasks and echelons. Another risk is that America only engages in conflicts it can afford, leading to a decline of international influence from limited national military power or national will to deter threats. The opportunity in the RAF concept is that a smaller military forces America to partner and help build capacity for its allies and rely more on the economic, informational, and diplomatic elements of national power. Regional alignment facilitates those relationships and approaches.

Conclusion

The RAF concept is the way ahead and habitually aligned divisions are the key to success. The FORSCOM commander, General Allyn, stated best, “The stability for regional alignment comes from the Army corps and division headquarters that continue to maintain a focus on the same region year after year.”⁷⁵ The Army must commit to long-term SRCA of headquarters to GCCs, increase efforts to align enablers and BCTs to corps and divisions, and expand the Hands program to regionally align individuals to all regions in order to realize advantages in mission command and maximize returns on investment for regional expertise.

The joint community and Army must better enable corps and division headquarters to be the core elements of JTF headquarters before crisis to benefit from regional alignment in achieving national interests

for geographic combatant commanders. The joint staff must expand the JECC and work with the Army to integrate Army and joint requirements for training, manning and equipping. The Army must establish mission command capacity at home-station to facilitate building and training JTF-capable HQs and to provide reach-back for HQs, BCTs, and enablers in the aligned region. Finally, the Army must build depth in joint certification through coding more corps and division positions as joint planners, thus requiring JPME II for majors and lieutenant colonels on the staff.

Many challenges would exist with or without RAF, but the initiative reduces “cold starts,” builds teams, develops individual and unit depth in regional expertise, and establishes shared vision and trust earlier during steady state activities. The RAF concept, Defense Strategic Guidance, Joint Vision 2020, and the Army Vision all require long-term commitment to shape regions and build partner capacity with less forces that are regionally focused, but predominately CONUS-based. The priority effort for RAF must be enabling division headquarters’ operational mission command as a JTF-capable HQ to link the tactical success to the GCC strategic plan in order to prevent, shape, and win.

Notes

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³ Rob McIlvaine, “Odierno: Regional Alignments to Begin Next Year,” May 16, 2012, linked from the United States Army Home Page, <http://www.army.mil/article/79919/> (accessed March 10, 2014).

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⁵ There are six geographic combatant commanders: Northern Command (NORTHCOM), Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), European Command (EUCOM), Central Command (CENTCOM), Africa Command (AFRICOM), and Pacific Command (PACOM) and three Functional Combatant Commanders: Strategic Command (STRATCOM), Transportation Command (TRANSCOM), and Special Operations Command (SOCOM).

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¹³ Martin E. Dempsey, “*Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020*,” September 10, 2012, pp. 2-4.

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¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ (FOUO) Raymond Odierno, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, “FRAGO 1 to HQDA Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) EXORD,” Washington, DC, Headquarters, Department of Army, October 17, 2013, 1.C.2.D. [This information is drawn from a FOUO document, but the portion of the information cited is unlimited unclassified.]

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